

## Brussels blog round up for 17– 23 November: Budget troubles, France is downgraded, and are European young farmers facing extinction?

by Blog Admin

**Chris Gilson and Stuart A Brown** take a look at the week in Brussels blogging.

### The EU centre

This week saw the summit to decide on the EU's budget for 2014-2020. On Monday, *Open Europe* had a good [roundup](#) of what the different countries want out of the budget, and who is likely to veto it. On Wednesday, *Lost in EUrope* was [pessimistic](#) about the summit's outcome. There is much discussion about Britain's role in the budget negotiations; *Open Europe* [says](#) that the UK is "not about to get completely stuffed in Europe". Meanwhile *Coulisses de Bruxelles* is worried that the European Commission has all but [absented](#) itself from the budget debate. Finally today, *Open Europe* discusses what it identifies as a '[leaked version](#)' of President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy's, latest proposed budget.

*Bruegel* has a [detailed report](#) on the wider implications of the budget, arguing that the focus on the overall size of the budget is misguided and much less important than how the budget is spent. *Jon Worth*, in a similar vein, takes a quick look at spending on the [Common Agricultural Policy](#), and the *Common Agricultural Policy* blog wonders if European young farmers may become [extinct](#).

The *European Citizen* looks at the [politics](#) of appointing Tonio Borg as a new European Commissioner. Many in the European Parliament disagree with his views on divorce and abortion. *ACELG* at *Blogactiv.eu* looks at the [circumstances](#) behind the resignation of his predecessor, John Dalli, saying that it "could constitute the plot of an institutional thriller". On a more general level, *Dimitar Toshkov* argues that while the Commission may be good at bureaucracy, it is [ineffective as a political actor](#) and suffers from an inability to influence public opinion.



Angela Merkel, Mariano Rajoy, Francois Holland and Mario Monti Credit: Mariano Rajoy Brey (Creative Commons BY NC ND)

*Public Affairs 2.0* has an interesting [solution](#) to Europe's fishing woes, while *Brian Gardner* at *Blogactiv.eu* [looks](#) at the European Commission's proposals to cut back on the biofuels section of its renewable energy policy.

### EU Foreign policy and the European neighbourhood

Over the weekend, *LostinEU* accuses the Nobel Prize winning EU of being [silent](#) over the escalating conflict between Gaza and Israel.

*Reuniting Europe* at Blogactiv.eu says that in the aftermath of its elections, Ukraine would like to send the message to the EU that it has [‘passed the test’](#), and would like to pursue closer relations by holding an EU-Ukraine summit.

*Karpfenteich* previews German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to [Russia](#) this week, saying that she will not encounter the same protests as when she visits EU countries. Meanwhile, *Matiyeshyn on Europe* at Blogactiv.eu looks at the recent gas pipe [agreement](#) between Russia and Bulgaria.

## The Euro Crisis

*Lost in Europe* looks at the dispute between the EU and the IMF on the [restructuring](#) of Greece's debt, saying that the emergency loans will not likely eventuate until the end of November. *Open Europe* says that the planned two year extension to Greece's bailout (when it does eventuate) could end up [costing](#) an extra €32.6 billion. Meanwhile, *Dimitris Rapidis* at Blogactiv.eu reports that over 2.3million Greeks now live [below the poverty threshold](#), at a time where social welfare has become almost completely non-existent.

*Rhein on Energy and Climate* at Blogactiv.eu says that the EU should look to Switzerland for [lessons](#) in economic policy – small government and decentralised political responsibility.

*Revolting Europe* says that there is [little benefit](#) to the recent round of privatizations in Southern Europe – except for ‘corporations and fat cats’.

## Across Europe

*Open Europe* marks the end of the [‘Monti paradox’](#), saying that now, most Italians no longer want the a second term for Italy's Prime Minister. Meanwhile, *Nucleus* at Blogactiv.eu looks at how austerity is [working](#) a year into Monti's premiership.

*Craig Willy* has a comprehensive [rebuttal](#) of the Economist's recent critique of the French economy, though France still [lost its AAA rating](#) from Moody's (to AA1) as reported by *Lost in Europe* this week. Perhaps it is something to do with France's growth projections being revised downwards as the *OFCE* blog [discusses](#). In terms of French politics, the biggest development this week was the disputed leadership contest in the opposition UMP party. The *Economist* has an assessment of what it states was an [‘unbelievably messy process’](#), which ultimately saw Jean-François Copé emerge as the winner over his rival François Fillon by only 98 votes.

*Nada es Gratis* looks at Spanish [labour reforms](#) aimed at reducing the number of workers on temporary contracts. Meanwhile, *Revolting Europe* says that Spain's [‘precarariat’](#) has swollen to nearly 21 million as a result of the crisis, and *European Ideas* says that investing in higher education may be key to [recovering prosperity](#) in Spain. *Lost in Europe* says that Spain is increasingly looking towards Latin America for [investment](#) to help it during the economic crisis.

On her blog, *Corina Cretu* [says](#) that the opposition PDL party in Romania has serious problems understanding democracy given their view that having a parliamentary session on Romania's position on the European Council meeting would be a ‘waste of time’.

The British Labour MEP, *Mary Honeyball* [reports](#) on Ed Miliband's speech to the Confederation of British Industry which made it clear that the UK's future lies with Europe. The *European Council on Foreign Relations* says that the UK's main value in Europe is [geopolitical](#).

*Beyond the Transition* [reports](#) that an Anders Breivik-style terror attack on the Polish parliament has been foiled by Polish Internal Security. Finally *Europe & Me* voice their opinion on [abortion laws](#).

## Image of the week

Open Europe takes a lighter look at the EU budget by drawing up a [‘team of the week’](#) of figures who have threatened to use their veto during negotiations:



### And finally...

What has President of the European Council, Herman van Rompuy been up to? This week he met with the [President of Haiti](#), Michel Martelly.

*Jon Worth* blogs that Schengen is a [myth](#), while *Euromove* at [Blogactiv.eu](#) address another 'myth' by looking at the claim that the EU is banning the reuse of [jam jars](#).

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*Note: This article gives the views of the author, and not the position of EUOPP – European Politics and Policy, nor of the London School of Economics.*

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